Draft Environmental Assessment
Horseshoe Lake and Woods Bay Fishing Access Site
Forest Management Project

August 2019

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS

Project Overview

Proposal

Montana's Fishing Access Site (FAS) program provides public access to high quality waters for angling, boating, rafting, and other recreation opportunities. In addition, FASs are often popular areas for hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, birdwatching, picnicking, etc. FASs typically provide developed recreational facilities such as parking areas and boat ramps as well as sometimes having larger areas of undeveloped land which is often forested. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' (FWP) forest management plan[1] (2018) directs FWP to manage forested FASs for public use and recreational values. Public safety, aesthetics, and visual screening are priorities for forest management in developed areas. Beyond developed areas and of secondary priority are insect and disease management, fire hazard mitigation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other recreation opportunities.

FWP is proposing to conduct forest management treatments on 2 FASs in the Bigfork area in FWP Region 1. The sites proposed for treatment include Woods Bay FAS and Horseshoe Lake FAS (Figure 1). The treatments would involve the removal of primarily conifer trees (both of merchantable and nonmerchantable value) for the purpose of mitigating hazard trees in developed areas, reducing hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface (WUI), and increasing resiliency to insects and diseases. Please see #8 (Narrative Summary) below, for a detailed description of the proposed action. If approved by the Fish and Wildlife Commission, the work could begin as early as November 2019.

Area Description

Woods Bay FAS (Figure 2) is located on Flathead Lake 4 miles south of Bigfork, MT on Yenne Pt, Rd, off Highway 35. It is 12 acres in size and offers a boat ramp, parking area, and toilet facilities.

Horseshoe Lake FAS (Figure 3) is located on Horseshoe Lake 2 miles south of Ferndale, MT on Bug Creek Rd, off Highway 209. It is 23 acres in size and offers a primitive boat ramp and small parking area.

1 Available upon request from R1 FWP (Kalispell) or FWP Fisheries (Helena) office.

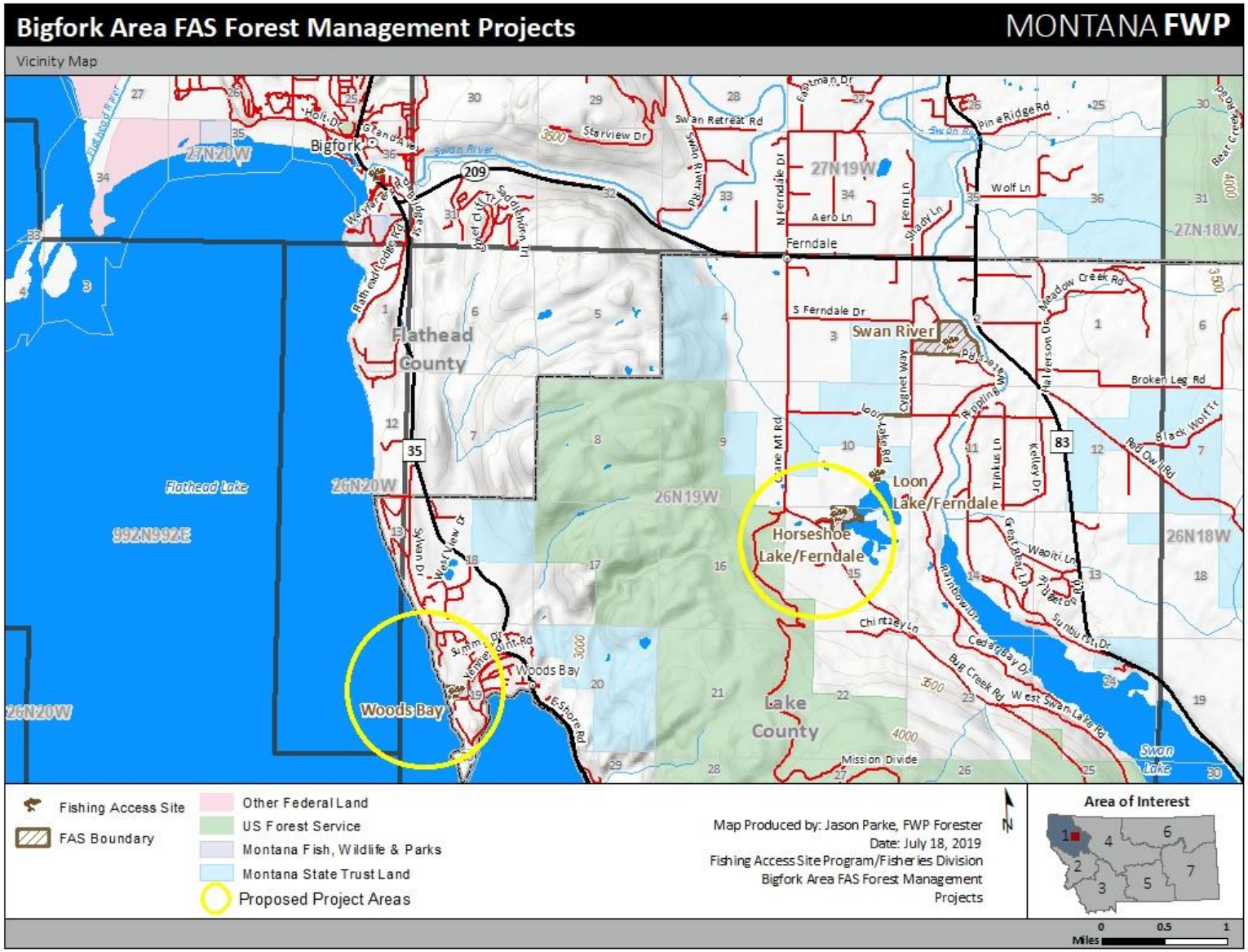

Figure 1 - Bigfork Area FAS Forest Management Projects Vicinity Map

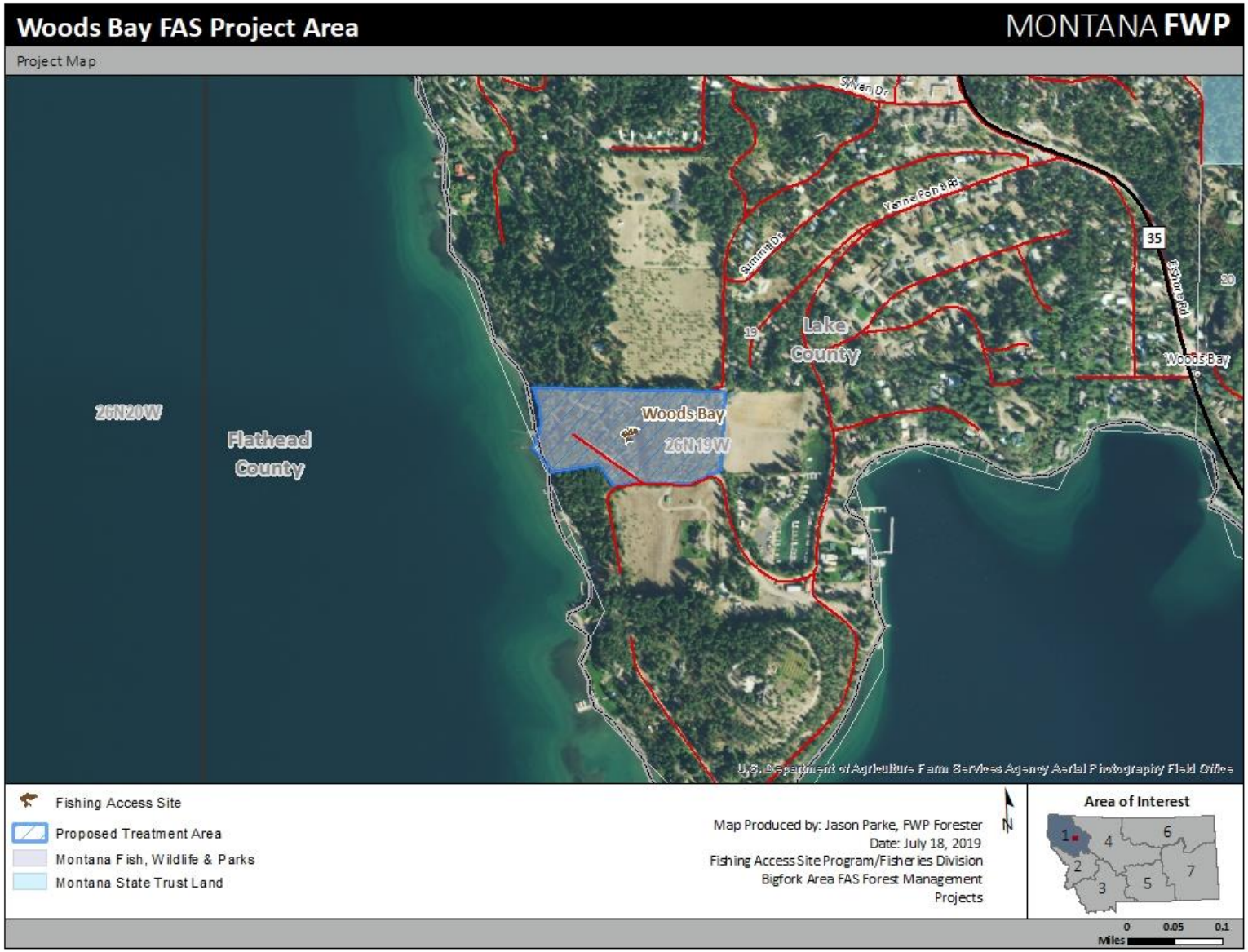

Figure 2 - Woods Bay FAS Project Area Map

Figure 3 - Horseshoe Lake FAS Project Area Map

MEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of proposed state action:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks proposes to conduct forest management treatments on approximately 20 acres of forest on 2 Fishing Access Sites in the Bigfork area in Region 1 (Figures 1 & 2). The treatments would involve the removal of conifer trees (both of merchantable and nonmerchantable value) through a combination of mechanized and nonmechanized methods. Please see #8 (Narrative Summary) below for a detailed description of the proposed action.

2. Agency authority for the proposed action:
FWP is authorized by law to own and manage lands as fishing access sites (FAS). The land subject to this proposal is included in Horseshoe Lake FAS and Woods Bay FAS. The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission endorsed this proposal in June 2019, allowing FWP to proceed with further development and analysis of this proposed action through completion of this Environmental Assessment.

87-1-201(9)(a)(iv) and 87-1-621 MCA
Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required to implement programs that address fire mitigation, pine beetle infestation, and wildlife habitat enhancement giving priority to forested lands in excess of 50 contiguous acres in any state park, fishing access site, or wildlife management area under the department's jurisdiction. The Montana Legislature has provided FWP the means to accrue revenue from forest management activities and spend that revenue to fund further management projects on its forested lands.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Forest Management Plan (2018)
The FWP Forest Management Plan directs FWP to manage for desired habitat conditions and public use opportunities while maintaining the ecological integrity of forests. The plan provides a framework for developing desired future conditions (DFCs), identifies mechanical and non-mechanical treatments as management tools to achieve DFCs, and establishes guidelines for implementing forestry treatments on FWP forested lands.

23-1-126 MCA, The Good Neighbor Policy of Public Land Use
As applied to public recreational land, the Good Neighbor Policy seeks to limit impacts to adjoining private and public recreational land from noxious weeds, trespass, litter, noise and light pollution, streambank erosion, and loss of privacy.

3. Name of project: Horseshoe Lake and Woods Bay Fishing Access Site Forest Management Project

4. Anticipated Schedule:

Estimated Commencement Date: November 1, 2019
Estimated Completion Date: April 15, 2021 (If necessary burning of slash could occur after this date)
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 5%

5. Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):

Woods Bay FAS (Figure 2)

Lake County
Township 26 North
Range 19 West
Section 19

Horseshoe Lake FAS (Figure 3)
Lake County
Township 26 North
Range 19 West
Section 15

6. Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	0
Residential	0		
Industrial	0	(e) Productive:	
(existing shop area)		Irrigated cropland	0
(b) Open Space/	20	Dry cropland	0
Woodlands/Recreation		Forestry	0
(c) Wetlands/Riparian	0	Rangeland	0
Areas		Other	0

7. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)	SMZ Alternative Practice

Hazard trees within the Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) would need to be addressed for public safety which would require an alternative practice under the SMZ law allowing ground-based equipment to operate in the SMZ.

(b) Funding:

Agency Name: Montana FWP
Funding Amount: Costs to FWP for these forest management treatments would be funded by a combination of the legislatively-established FWP Forest Management Account, grant funding, and FAS operations and maintenance funds. Any revenue in excess of project costs would be deposited into the account to implement further forest management projects pursuant to the provisions of 87-1-201(9)(a)(iv).

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Montana State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural and Historic Resources
Lake County Weed District	Noxious weed control
Montana Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation	Fire Protection

8. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

FWP is proposing to conduct forest management treatments on approximately 20 acres of 2 separate FASs with the purpose of:

- Removing hazard trees that pose a threat to public safety, property, and infrastructure
- Reducing the potential for hazard trees to develop by maintaining or enhancing individual tree and stand-level resilience and resistance to stressors and damaging agents (such as drought, insects and disease, wildfire)
- Reducing hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface
- Improving and maintaining aesthetics (e.g. shade, noise and visual buffering, park-like setting) by promoting:
    - desirable trees with healthy and full crowns
    - large trees (relatively large bole diameter and height)
    - ponderosa pine and western larch over Douglas-fir and grand fir
    - removal of undesirable and suppressed trees that are competing with desirable trees
- Selling any resulting merchantable tree byproducts to offset treatment costs and generate revenue for the FWP Forest Management Account

Forest management treatments are expected to benefit:

- Safety of the public in the short-term (through removal of immediate hazard trees) and in the long-term (by promoting healthy and vigorous trees and stand conditions that would be more resilient to stressors and damaging agents)
- Improvements (such as fences, signs, structures, toilet facilities, etc.) within developed areas would be less prone to damage from falling trees.
- Neighboring lands and structures that may be affected by hazardous fuels in the event of a wildfire
- Aesthetics of the FASs
- A variety of wildlife species that depend on more open stand conditions (such as for foraging on understory grasses, forbs, and shrubs)
- FWP operations and maintenance funding through reduced costs of mitigating hazard trees by addressing the underlying forest health issues that lead to the development of hazard trees (i.e. tree mortality) and potentially through revenue generated by forest products sales to treat additional FASs in the future.

Forest management treatments would include approximately 20 acres of tree removal (both of trees with merchantable and nonmerchantable value). In silvicultural terms, these types of forest treatments would be categorized as sanitation and improvement cutting. Trees selected for removal would be based on several factors including:

- Removing hazardous trees that pose a threat to public safety, property, or improvements
- Removing trees affected by insects or diseases that have the potential to become hazards in the near future
    - Dead trees (called "snags") would be retained for wildlife, such as cavity nesting birds, where they do not pose a threat public safety, property, or improvement.
- Removing suppressed and intermediate trees that are competing with desirable dominant and codominant trees for resources (sunlight, nutrients, and water) which, in turn increases the potential for insect- and disease-induced mortality

- Removing trees that contribute to the potential for crown fires (such as ladder fuels which are tree canopies that form vertical layers that can allow surface fires to ascend into overstory tree crowns in the event of a wildfire)
- Removing additional trees to reduce competition stress and create a more vigorous and resilient stand condition overall.

Tree removal would be accomplished through a combination of mechanized methods. Merchantable trees would be treated with ground-based logging equipment, such as feller-bunchers and skidders, that would cut and skid trees to designated roadside locations (called "landings"). Tree stems would be delimbed and processed into logs. Logs would be loaded onto log trucks and hauled to local forest product manufacturing facilities. Nonmerchantable trees (trees too small to be manufactured into forest products) would be treated by mastication or felled with chainsaws. Slash (the nonmerchantable limbs and tree tops) and cull material generated from this process would be treated either by piling and burning, grinding or chipping, and/or removing the material from the site. Ground disturbance is expected on skid trails and at landing areas. Any ground disturbance (exposed, displaced, or compacted soils) would be rehabbed and seeded with a native grass seed mix. Contractors hired to do this work would be required to adhere to Montana Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs). FWP would develop a site-specific treatment plan for each site with contractors hired to do this work. This plan would identify resource protection measures to minimize impacts to the site. FWP would oversee the activities while they are on-going to ensure compliance with the plan and to minimize resource impacts.

Access to the project areas would be from existing roads. Roads would be upgraded to the extent necessary to facilitate logging and log hauling while meeting BMPs. Temporary "jump-up" roads (relatively short spur roads) may be needed in some areas. These would be located on flat ground and where excavation could be avoided. Ground impacts, such as more severe soil compaction or soil exposure, may be greater on these spur roads. These would be reclaimed and blocked to prevent unauthorized motorized use.

The operating period for the proposed treatments would be from November 1 through April 15 to minimize impacts to users. Ground based logging equipment would be required to operate under relatively dry, frozen, or snow-covered conditions to minimize impacts to soil and vegetation. Other clean-up and rehab activities, such as slash treatment and grass seeding, could potentially occur throughout the operating period. If slash is piled and burned, burn piles would be located in openings away from residual trees and neighboring property lines. Burning would be conducted in accordance with open burning seasons and applicable state and county regulations.

Road work and logging activities would comply with Montana Forestry BMPs and the Montana Streamside Management Zone law. To minimize the spread of noxious weeds; all equipment would be cleaned and inspected by FWP before moving onto the FWP lands. Exposed bare mineral soils would be reseeded immediately and any weed infestations would be treated with herbicides indefinitely through annual FAS weed management efforts.

Woods Bay FAS Proposed Treatment

Access to Woods Bay FAS is from Yenne Point Rd and Whitecap Lane, approximately, 1 mile from US Highway 35 near the community of Woods Bay. The area proposed for treatment is approximately 8 acres (Figure 4). The proposed treatment area is easily accessed by existing roads within the site. The forest stand is dominated by single-storied Douglas-fir (Figure 5). Many of these trees are suppressed due to the density of the stand. Ponderosa pine and western larch make up the remaining 15% of the trees in the proposed treatment area. Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe (DFDM) – DFDM is present throughout the stand, especially on the ridge and slope east

of the boat launch (Figure 6). Armillaria root disease is present in the western half of the FAS which is creating some hazard trees around the boat launch and parking area. Pockets of dense understory Douglas-fir ladder fuels pose a crown fire risk. The property is bordered by private lands with residences on three sides and the site slopes up from the lake increasing the potential for rapid fire growth. The proposal for this site would be remove hazard trees near the parking area, thin the understory Douglas-fir to reduce ladder fuels, and thin suppressed and intermediate trees to improve stand vigor. FWP would mark trees to cut with tree paint based on the removal criteria described previously in the summary of proposed action.

Figure 4- Proposed Treatment Area, Woods Bay FAS (Red)

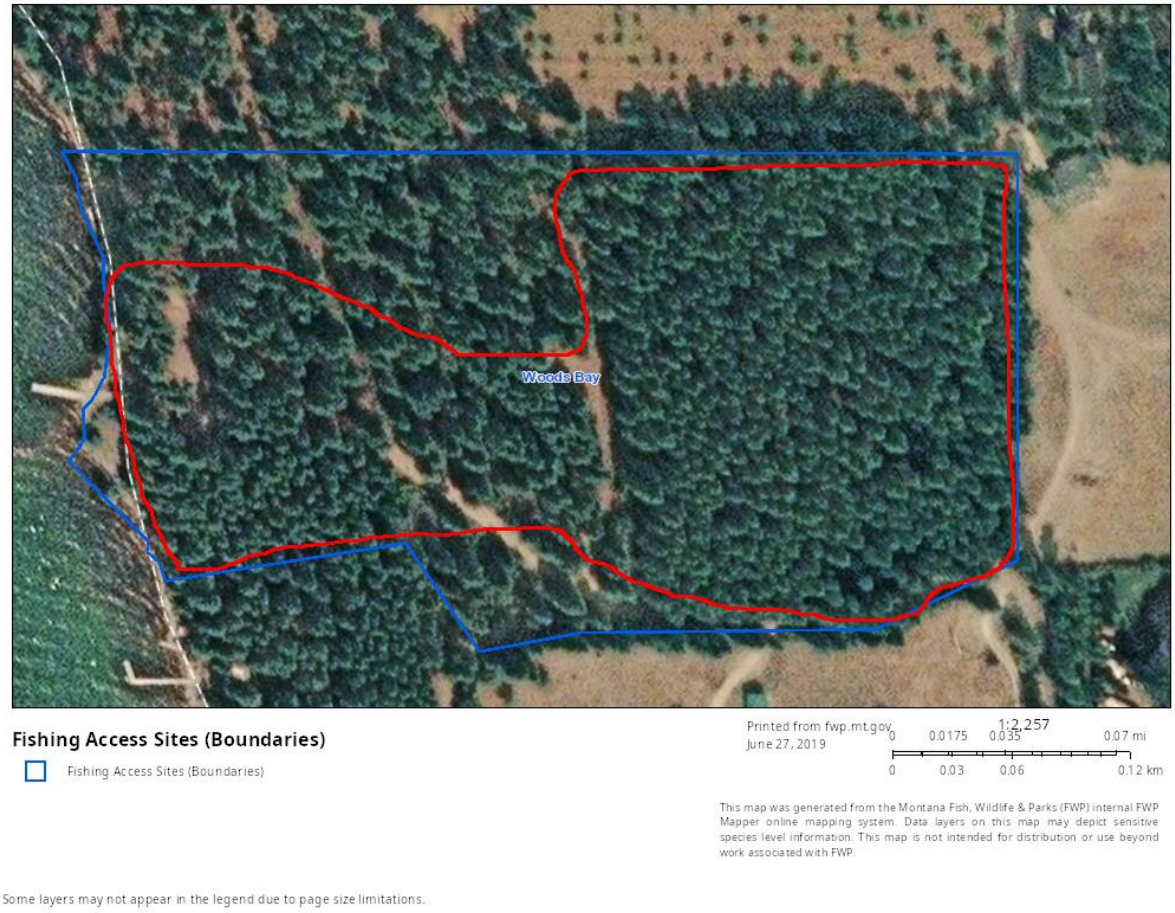

Figure 5- Single-storied stand of Douglas-fir, Woods Bay FAS in which removal of suppressed trees could improve stand health and vigor.

Figure 6- Douglas-fir Dwarf Mistletoe and hazard trees near parking area, Woods Bay FAS. Hazard tress would be removed for public safety.

Horseshoe Lake FAS Proposed Treatment

Access to Horseshoe Lake FAS is by South Ferndale Drive, Crane Mountain Rd and Bug Creek Rd. The area proposed for treatment is approximately 12 acres (Figure 7). The proposed treatment area has good access from existing roads within the site. The site is bordered by private property with residences on three sides and by Horseshoe and Loon lakes on one side. This site features a diverse mix of tree species including Douglas-fir, grand fir, western hemlock, western red cedar, western larch, western white pine and ponderosa pine. The proposed treatment area is primarily comprised of a dense stand of sapling-sized grand fir (Figure 8). These trees would be thinned to promote growth and vigor of the stand and reduce the amount of grand fir in favor of longer-lived and more insect and disease resistant species such as western larch, ponderosa pine, and western red cedar. A masticator would likely be used in this area. Several mature grand fir and western hemlock in the immediate vicinity of the parking area are infected with Indian Paint Fungus which has weakened the stems of those trees. These hazard trees would be removed to eliminate the threat they pose to public safety and infrastructure. FWP would use a combination of marking trees to cut with tree paint and providing cut-by-description language in contracts, based on the removal criteria described previously in the summary of proposed action.

Figure 7- Proposed Treatment Area (red) Horseshoe Lake FAS

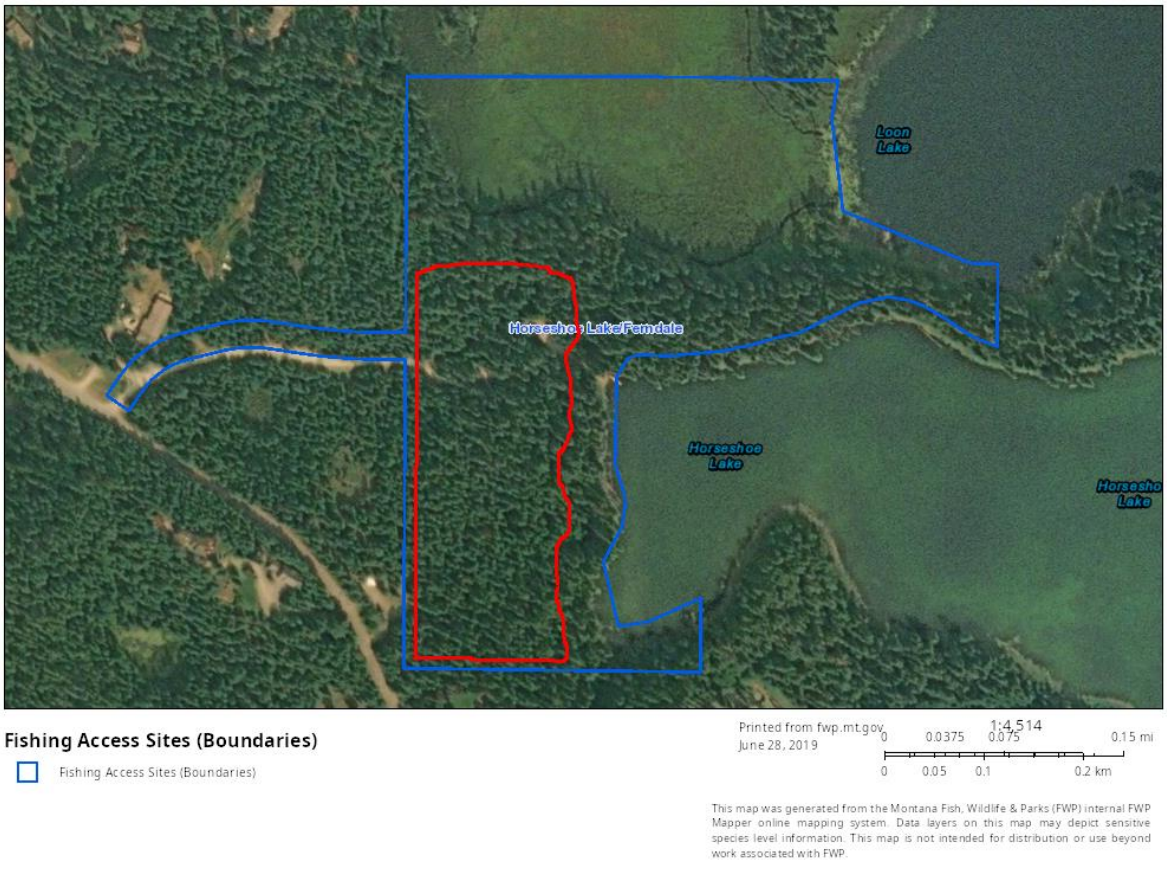

Figure 8- Dense sapling-size Grand-fir common in the proposed treatment area would be thinned to promote stand health and reduce wildfire risk.

9. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternative A: No Action

Fish, Wildlife & Parks would not conduct the proposed forest management activities under this alternative. Forest succession and competition amongst trees for limited resources (nutrients, sunlight, and water) would continue, leading to decreased stand vigor and potential for trees and stands to be less resilient to stressors and damaging agents. Maintenance costs may increase over time as more trees die and increasingly pose threats to public safety, property, and improvements. Dead and downed fuels may increase and as new trees regenerate in gaps created from overstory mortality, ladder fuels may also increase leading to increased hazardous fuel build up. Dead and downed trees may negatively affect the aesthetics of the FASs and make recreational use of these areas more difficult. Higher stand densities and increased dead and downed wood may increase habitat availability for species that depend on that condition while potentially negatively affecting species that depend on more open stand conditions. No timber would be sold to off-set the cost of on-going hazard tree mitigation work.

FWP would continue mitigating hazard trees and maintaining improvements in these FASs.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

Conduct forested habitat treatments on approximately 20 acres of the 2 FASs as described in #8 (Narrative Summary), above. Following this action, FWP anticipates that hazard trees would be mitigated, tree vigor and resilience to insects and diseases would be improved, hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface would be reduced, aesthetics would be improved, and the sale of timber may off-set the cost of this work.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X		Yes	1.b
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other (list)		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1.b. Existing roads would need to be improved to facilitate removal of timber and timber byproduct. These roads would be brought up to BMP specifications and all road work would comply with current BMP standards and applicable laws to minimize impacts to riparian areas and prevent sediment delivery to (or siltation of) perennial water bodies. Logging activity may disturb and compact soil, potentially temporarily impacting vegetation.

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))			X		Yes	2.a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X		Yes	2.b
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2.a,b. Slash and residual byproduct generated by the proposed treatments may be burned on-site. Burning of slash would comply with Lake County open burning timing restrictions and comply with inter-agency slash treatment regulations.

3. **WATER** Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X		Yes	3.b
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?			X		Yes	3.d
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
I. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3.b,d. Treating the subject stands may slightly alter the rate and volume of spring runoff and retained snowpack. Given the limited scale of the project and condition of adjacent stands, this effect is expected to be minor.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		Yes	4.a
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4.b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		Yes	4.e
f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4.a,b,e. Part of the project intent is to improve forest vigor and reduce the susceptibility of the treated stands to insects, diseases, and crown fire. The proposed action would thin forest stands, reducing competition stress of the residual vegetation within the treatment units. The thinning would support growth of shrubs and other deciduous vegetation by opening the canopy and allowing more sunlight to get to the forest floor. Please see #8 above for a more detailed description of proposed treatments. Noxious weed spread would be mitigated by requiring equipment to be washed before entering the FAS, minimizing ground disturbance, immediately reseeding disturbed areas, and treating affected areas or areas at risk with herbicide for at least 3 years following the treatment.

5. FISH / WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X		Yes	5.b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X		Yes	5.c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?			X		Yes	5.g
h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				5.h
I. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife:

5.b,c. The project could cause minor and temporary changes in the diversity or abundance of game and non-game species that use these two sites but is not expected to have an impact on the overall diversity or abundance of species in the region. Given the scale of the proposed project, these impacts are expected to be minor and temporary. Some species would be temporarily stressed and possibly displaced during active thinning operations and would likely return soon after the project is complete. Wildlife trees, or snags would be left where they do not pose a threat to public safety. Pockets of thick sapling sized trees would be left for cover where appropriate.

5.h. Grizzly bears are listed as threatened by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and both sites are within the habitat range of grizzly bears. While grizzly bears have been observed in the vicinity of both sites, neither site provides critical habitat for bears. The project is small in scale and is not expected to adversely affect bear populations or their habitat.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE & ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X		No	6.a
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X		No	6.b
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6.a,b. Logging and trucking equipment would increase noise levels on the project area while activities are ongoing, but these activities would occur outside of high-use seasons for the FASs (e.g., during the late-fall through early-spring season). Merchantable timber byproducts would be transported out of the FASs via existing road within the FASs and county roads.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8. RISK / HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?			X			8.a
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X			8.c
d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8.a,c. Timber management activities are inherently dangerous. All contractors would be required to comply with federal and state safety standards for logging operations as established by the United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA; 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910 and any other such applicable regulations promulgated by OSHA) and as required by Title 50, Chapter 71 of the Montana Code Annotated, and any regulations promulgated to implement the statutes found in that Title and Chapter of the Montana Code Annotated.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?			X		N/A	9.c.
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?			X		N/A	9.d.
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X		Yes	9.e
f. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9.c,d,e. Jobs would be created or sustained by project work while the project is ongoing. Log hauling and contractor traffic would increase during the project. Roads and other infrastructure that would be used by contractors were designed (and would be maintained) to support commercial logging and log transport activities. Signage would be placed near the entrance of the FAS and where log trucks would enter public roads to alert traffic of log truck activity. According to the Montana Bureau of Business and Economic Research, the harvest of a million board-feet of timber equates to roughly 10 jobs annually.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?			X		N/A	10.b
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?			X		N/A	10.d
e. Define projected revenue sources			X		N/A	10.e
f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X		N/A	10.f
g. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10.b,d. The Project would be expected to increase state and local tax revenues from the sale of fuel, supplies and/or equipment and from contractor employees' income. Fuel and electricity would be required to treat stands and process the timber byproduct.

10.e. Depending on the market conditions of logging and hauling costs, and delivered log prices for the timber byproduct removed, the project might generate revenue for FWP's Forest Management Account (authorized by § 87-1-621, MCA) to be used for future forest management projects.

10.f. Post-treatment maintenance costs may be incurred for slash disposal and noxious weed treatments. FWP would provide funding for maintenance costs from its Forest Management Account. The mitigation of hazard trees may reduce the maintenance burden.

11. AESTHETICS / RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X		N/A	11.a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11.a. Some treated stands would be visible from roads and developed sites within FAS and, in the short term (< 3 years), aesthetics may be negatively affected until the slash and debris has been cleaned up and disturbed ground has been rehabbed. In the long term (> 5 years), aesthetics would be improved. FWP anticipates that the crown fire risk and potential for bark beetle infestation, which would also modify the scenic vista, would be reduced.

12. CULTURAL / HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant	Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)						12.d
e. Other:						12.e

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12.d,e. FWP would consult with the State Historic Preservation office (SHPO) on this proposed project and avoid altering heritage properties or paleontological remains. If cultural artifacts were to be discovered during the project, FWP would cease activities and contact SHPO, and potentially adjust the project design to avoid impacting these resources.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown	None	Minor	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)			X		Yes	13.a
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13.a. This project would mitigate hazardous trees, improve tree vigor and reduce susceptibility of stand to insects and diseases, reduce crown fire potential within the proposed treatment units, improve aesthetics, and potentially generate revenue for the FWP forest management account. Work proposed in this EA may compliment similar forestry work on adjacent lands, but FWP does not anticipate any cumulative negative impacts to result if this project were completed.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to implement forest management activities on approximately 20 acres of forest on two separate FASs in FWP Region 1. If approved by the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission, the project could begin as early as November 2019. The purpose is to address hazard trees that pose a threat to public safety, property, and improvements; improve resilience and resistance to stressors and damaging agents; reduce hazardous fuels in the wildland-urban interface; improve aesthetics; and potentially generate income for the FWP forest management account.

FWP would select trees for removal based on the criteria described in #8 (Narrative Summary) above. Site-specific operating plans would be developed for each site to be treated and FWP would oversee operations while they are on-going. Slash disposal and rehabilitation would be required as part of the contract and FWP would implement integrated noxious weed management to prevent noxious weed establishment and spread. Operations would be conducted in the late-fall through early-spring to minimize impact to users. Ground disturbing activities would be limited to periods of relatively dry, frozen, or snow-covered conditions. Contractors would be required to adhere to Montana Forestry BMPs. The cost of the project is expected to be partially offset by the sale of timber byproducts and, depending on market conditions and logging costs, the projects may generate income for the FWP forest management account.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

The public would be notified as follows, to comment on the proposed Horseshoe Lake and Woods Bay FAS Forest Management Project, including its draft EA and alternatives:

- A news release would be prepared and distributed to a standard list of media outlets interested in FWP Region 1 issues. This news release would also be posted on FWP Region 1's website http://fwp.mt.gov/regions/r1/.
- One legal notice would be published in each of these newspapers: Daily Interlake (Kalispell), Flathead Beacon (Kalispell), *Independent Record* (Helena), Bigfork Eagle (Bigfork).
- Copies would be available at the FWP Region 1 Headquarters in Kalispell and the FWP State Headquarters in Helena.
- Copies of this environmental assessment would be mailed (or notification of its availability emailed) to neighboring landowners and other interested parties (individuals, groups, agencies) to assure their knowledge of the Proposed Action.
- Public notice on FWP's webpage: http://fwp.mt.gov ("News," then "Recent Public Notices"). The Draft EA would also be available on this website, along with the opportunity to submit comments online.

Copies of this EA may be obtained by mail from Region 1 FWP, 490 N Meridian Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901; by phoning 406-752-5501; by emailing tpowell@mt.gov or by viewing FWP's website http://fwp.mt.gov under Public Notices.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope having few physical and human impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Public Comment Period

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days beginning September 1, 2019. Comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on September 30, 2019 and can be mailed to the address below:

Region 1 FWP
Attn: Tony Powell
490 N Meridian Rd,
Kalispell, MT 59901

or emailed to Tony Powell at tpowell@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

No. Based upon the above assessment which has identified a limited number of minor impacts to the physical and human environment that would be either for a short duration or can be mitigated below the level of significance, an EIS in not required and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of review.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Tony Powell
Fishing Access Site Program Manager, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region One
490 N Meridian Rd, Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 751-5423

R. Jason Parke
Forester, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620
(406) 444-7329

3. List of entities consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Wildlife Division

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Fisheries Division